

GRAVITY HILL 2015



JEN GEORGE
EDITOR

Gravity Hill

Jen George, Editor

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Editor's Page

I would like to welcome everyone to the 2015 edition of *Gravity Hill*. In my four years at St. Andrews, I have witnessed countless changes and developments. *Gravity Hill* was not immune to these changes. In fact, for the first time, I am proud to say that *Gravity Hill* will be available digitally. This is extremely exciting for the St. Andrews community.

The content in this year's edition of *Gravity Hill* represents the diversity in our student population. With poems and short stories covering a wide variety of topics—from Eminem and stingrays to spring and Johnny Walker—every element of fun is touched upon and no topic goes undiscussed. The talent of the student body is evident in this collection of poems, plays, and short stories. I'm proud to be the editor of the literary magazine that is as unique as the school.

I would like to thank the St. Andrews student body. It was not easy selecting the pieces I want to include. I tried very hard to capture the spirit of St. Andrews through the submitted works. The hard work each of you put into your pieces is evident (even if you did just type it up ten minutes before class), and I thank you for the smile you put on my face as I read each piece. I appreciate every person that would stop me and ask if they still had time to submit something, showing that the passion for writing is overwhelming among the students.

Additionally, I would like to thank the staff for being so supportive of *Gravity Hill*. It is not often that a literary magazine of this nature sees so much success, and I believe *Gravity Hill* is successful because of the staff. They encourage students to write and submit work. By doing so, they instill a desire to write. Without that, this would never be possible.

More specifically, I need to thank Dr. Ted, without whom this literary magazine would have never been completed. Dr. Ted put in a great deal of time into making *Gravity Hill* successful. He

pushed me to complete tasks, despite my tendencies to procrastinate until the last possible moment. Dr. Ted is also a main factor behind the success of *Gravity Hill*. I look forward to seeing future editions.

And finally, I would like to thank my friends and family. My parents, William and Cindra, have been nothing but supportive. Assuming writing and poetic talent are genetic, I would say I got my talent from my father. He has proven to be somewhat of a poetic genius. As for my friends, they, too, have shown support. I remember three years ago, when I was just a freshmen, one of my friends was the editor of *Gravity Hill*. I would walk into her room and she would have papers scattered everywhere as she searched through them, deciding what to include and frantically typing. I didn't realize then, but I would eventually follow in her footsteps.

Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

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Poet

Brittany Burkhart

Philosopher

On any and all drugs

Everything is doom and gloom

Those pretentious twats

Men in Battle with Peace

Rosalind Moffatt-Haizel

In moments of tranquility
Under the skies I sit
Thinking and reminiscing
Men at war with peace
Peace fled through the window
As being chased by bullets
Gunpowder is all I smell as the perfumes of the air
All because men are at war with peace

At dawn the humming of dirges of war I hear
Blood of the innocent cries
Mercy! Mercy! These voices once danced innocently
When peace was king
Blood all around me, as it was a painting of the wall
The sweet songs now turned sour
Gunshots are now the musical beats
All because men are at war with peace

Simple men drown in starvation
The towers of goodness and serenity no more
Under the skies I sit
The stars my only companion
Wondering when peace doth cometh
Yesterday I was a happy soul
Today I drown in my tears.
All because men are at war with peace

The presence of Apollyon and the heavens seems near
If I do not wake up
To see the new morn of a perfumed gunpowder
Do not grieve over me
Mourn because men are at war with peace

You Don't Have To Be Perfect

Katie Buckley

It's okay to have a defect.
I know you think that won't do.
You don't have to be perfect.

You always show respect.
Your manners aim to woo.
It's okay to have a defect.

Your sturdy step has a strong effect.
You resonate confidence too.
You don't have to be perfect.

You aim to always be correct.
To be precise in everything you do.
It's okay to have a defect.

Your jobs you never did neglect.
You always followed through.
You don't have to be perfect.

And now that I reflect.
You never bid adieu.
It was okay to have a defect.
You didn't have to be perfect.

In Memory of Alec Gilmore

Johnnie Walker

Samantha Taylor

Johnnie Walker is a Scotch Whiskey
It makes some people feel a little frisky
A sip here and a sip there
Can turn some people into a pair.

Johnnie Walker may also be my boyfriend
But this guy is not a whisky, a gin, or the end
A kiss here and a kiss there
With his beard he feels like a bear.

Inheritance

Nicole Napoleone

I inherited your eyes,
I inherited your nose,
I inherited your mouth.

I inherited your smarts,
I inherited your sarcasm,
I inherited your love of words.

Don't let my inheritance
Be an object,
Something to silence me.

Let my inheritance
Be a memory
Of our time together.

It's not about the value,
Because you are priceless.
Therefore,

A simple memory
Is more than I deserve,
But all that I ask for.

April I

Katie Mosca

One moment in the year,
the ground thaws—
for real.

snow gone,
grass grows—
for bare feet.

can you hear the birds sing?
a song of happiness—
on the wings of spring.

April II

here is a bird
on a tree
listening to spring
thaw

how
beautiful
and
fragile
his
small
frame
is

Thirsty

Connor Maloney

It's alright for you to think
That you're attractive.
But don't walk around
As if people should praise you.
You say you are different
And you say you are strong.
The text you sent to the three of us
Proves that to be wrong.
Texting three of us saying
"I have a single ;)"
Doesn't look too good on your part.

I will say that I admire your efforts
To continue to try after being declined.
But with the way you search,
Do you think you are going to find
The relationship you are looking for?

What makes this all the better
Is that we were all playing FIFA.
You seem rather desperate.
Don't you know we are the best of friends?
When you texted the second person,
We all laughed.
When you texted the third,
Tears came out of my eyes.

Drinkin' Song

Sophia Iannuzzi

We'll start early on
Responsibilities long foregone
You get the cups, I'll bring the booze
With spirits this high, we've got nothing to lose.
Take as much as you'll fit in your mitt,
We won't quit until we're lit!

To those who'll fall who were once bold and able,
Funny, we drank you right under the table!
Stacks of glasses far as eyes can see
It's no party 'til we're as loud as a banshee!
No time for manners, no time for wit,
We won't quit until we're lit!

Don't come to us if you're looking for class
We ain't pleased 'til we're flat on our ass!
When dawn breaks we know it'll be time for sleep
But tomorrow, back to the bar we will creep!
Mindless an effort, and yet we've got grit!
We won't quit until we're lit!

Logophile

Sweet saccharine syllables
Spill from my mouth
Like syrup.

Prose on petrichor pops
on rapid lips,
eager to perform.

Imbricating iambic pentameter
Pours from the spaces
Between my teeth.

Furtive terms and idioms lilt
About my brainspace.
Murmuring mellifluous incantations.

My love for exquisite words is insatiable.
Illogical, obsessive, all-consuming.
Inescapable.

Flesh and Bone

I am not merely of flesh and bone.
I am of paint and crescendo, ink and stone.
An apple from a tree of muses--
A line far longer than I've known.
Fair and strong, yet not without bruises,
Their form built not unlike my own.
I am not merely of flesh and bone.

Virtuoso virtues for which this bloodline's prone,
Have passed through generations becoming stronger
as it's grown.
Harlequins and hoaxers some, whose claim to fame
are ruses,
In hindsight should long have been disowned;
They are made of similar thread, in like stitches fuses.
In that way they're not alone.
I am of paint and crescendo, ink and stone.

Although in time from the nest I've flown,
There is one thought that always amuses:
I am of paint and crescendo, ink and stone.
I am not merely of flesh and bone.

Nooture

Matthew Malik

where are we?
off the grid

Poseidon's
a bitch
trying to teach me
about the migration
of rays
They swim

through the ocean current
them—**disguising**—selves
as sharks to us casuals

A group of stingrays is called a fever.

Did you know?

No, Poseidon, you're so omniscient

The flapping
of wings
propels through
water
stinger as rudder through
coral reefs and sea
weed

The fever of rays

bring their mouths out
of the water,
gasping
gargling
gurgling
as air
comes into gills

They shout, "Steve
Irwin ,
we're sorry."

Jen George

Oh, how I love seeing your face
But that headband ...

The colors, oh, the colors!
They're vibrant, sometimes dull
Red, blue, green, white
All upon your tender skull!

Those days with headbands
Make me smile oh so much.
It pulls back your hair
With a simple and delicate touch.

Oh, Jen George,
Please wear a headband.
I think I'm falling in love,
I hope you understand.

Ode to Eminem

Jennifer George

I love you, Slim Shady, you know this is true
been with you since your break through

I've been fascinated since you dropped *Infinite*
and I quickly realized it was fire you spit

fell more in love when you bleached your hair
was with you through every single drug scare

I was excited to hear you divorced your wife
I'll look past that you threatened her with a knife

My favorite movie, that be *8 Mile*
When I watch the last rap battle, I can't help but smile

When it comes to my favorite song, I can't decide
"Stan," "White America," "97 Bonnie & Clyde"

My favorite album, it's really hard to say
Encore—Relapse—Recovery, changes day to day

Your rhymes are sick, though sometimes odd
You truly are my Rap God

Legacy

Stuart Marshall

Will I someday be a great-great-grandfather
A patriarch of a great family
The esteemed old portrait
That watches over generations
From the mantel in the dining room?

Will they treat my home place as their own
As hallowed ground
A shrine dedicated
To the dawn of their own existence ... ?
And if that home burns to the ground
Will they make pilgrimages to see
A lone tree that remains from my time?

Although they carry that same name
My name
Will they be proud of it?
Will they know all that it means?
Will I be more than a mere stranger
Who shares their blood?

How much of my identity
Will still be evident within their personalities
For generations to come?
Will my imprint be recognized?

How will they remember me?
By a handful of conflicting stories
And a lone faded photograph?
Or a profound legacy
That my children will fight to preserve?

Will they want to reunite with me?

Will it matter to them?
Will they hope to meet me some day
And ask the questions
Whose answers were buried with me?

Faith is no guarantee
You believe sometimes effortlessly
Sometimes because you want to
But most times because you need to.

You need to know
That you will see them again
You need to feel
That their existence is more
Than holdout synapses
Locked away
Inside an archaic mind.
And how many memories will remain of me?
Will I be seen again?

The future is uncertain
But the past will always be a mystery
Until your Time comes.



Oedipus

Stuart Marshall

Botanical Phoenix

I was born in the land of the pines.

I will be buried in that very soil.

I hope to, similarly, live my life evergreen.

If one takes an ax to my torso, I hope my
blood spills like sap
Producing only a few drops; then festering wounds close
with golden amber.
& if my blood is to flow, perhaps it will be used in the hull
of some great ship.

If I render myself a longleaf, I will have to learn to live in
fire,
tempest-born. No controlled burn;
wild, savage flames consume all undergrowth,
reduce it to ash that can be consumed, taken in by my
roots.
Death is life, life from death; the pine needle sews the quilt
that keeps me from freezing.

May no other trees block my shade. If so, it will mean the
saw. Serrated vengeance.
This tree will stand alone; my sight will not be plagued
with stumpy unpleasantries. Unpleasant trees and
grotesque growth.

There will be no excessive communion; grape vines may
choke out all life around them.
I heard it through them.

If I render myself a longleaf, I will have to learn to live in
fire, tempest-born: a botanical phoenix. Ashes to ashes,
dust to dust. Sapling to towering giant. My life depends on
both the maelstrom of fire and the whirlwind of rainstorm.

The bite is worse than the bark.
Biting teeth of a saw may rip through me with ease: a steel
blade may take me yet.
Timber.

Haiku

Justin Brown

This haiku is long.
Just kidding.

Mrs. Hallowell's Dancing Class

Jim Beales

It was time, our mothers agreed, for us boys to learn some of the “social graces.” The year was 1933, and we were ten years old.

The idea of getting dressed in uncomfortable clothes, as though we were getting ready for church, was not at all what we had in mind in addition to really cleaning our faces, having our hair slicked down, and scrubbing—really scrubbing—our hands and fingernails was an ordeal enough. Besides, we were told that it was necessary to wear white gloves so as not to soil the girls' dresses with our sweaty palms. Also, the idea of appearing on the waxed floor of the auditorium of the First Congregational Church with a phalanx of tittering girls in front of us and to endure the judgmental and piercing eyes of our mothers behind us was enough to cause panic. We were trapped.

It was all part of a sinister plot by our parents and teachers. Hadn't we been forced, the year before, and against our will, to don white pants and jackets to participate in the Maypole festivities at Binney Park? Picture the approving parents, as boys and girls alternated with their ribbons in hand, as they weaved round and round the Maypole, tighter and tighter

they went—boy, girl, boy, girl. The whole purpose of that exercise was simply to get youngsters of both sexes to get to know each other better.

Mrs. Hallowell's Dancing Class, however, was far more formal. Besides, the classes were to last through the long fall and winter months. We had much sooner been outside enjoying games that all boys play. If a girl happened to show up at our games, she often had to suffer the indignity of having a boy sneak up behind her and drop a stone, some dirt, or even a wiggly worm, down the back of her dress. Upon which, she would run home screaming, crying for her mother. We liked the rough and tumble of sporting games. Most of all, we liked playing in the mud and building small dams on the roadside gutters. We were the bane of our parents, that's for sure.

The auditorium of the First Congregational Church had a slick, shiny floor; it was the domain of Mrs. Hallowell for the next two hours. She was supremely in charge. She cut a handsome figure: tall and statuesque, outfitted in a long sequined dress that completely hid her dancing shoes.

The male accompanist sat at the piano, his back to the dance floor, awaiting instructions. Key to the exercise was the omnipresent cricket, held in Mrs. Hallowell's right hand.

The sound of the cricket demanded that all activities cease immediately, and that silence prevailed.

Once the new dance was explained, the next click of the cricket allowed the proceedings to resume. We, as robots, hated the sound of the cricket, but were brainwashed by it. It worked every time.

The girls were herded in by Mrs. Hallowell, in single file, and told to sit, primly, in their seats. While the parents looked on approvingly, the boys were then brought in by Mrs. Hallowell through the door on the opposite side. Already, hot under our tight-fitting collars and ill-fitting shoes, we were told that we were to proceed across the dance floor—“Do not rush, take your time, act as little gentlemen.” Once we had selected a partner, we were instructed to bend forward and say, “May I have the pleasure of this dance?” to which the damsel of our choice was to stand and politely reply, “Yes, you may.”

It was to be an orderly meeting, bringing out the finest in refined behavior. Unfortunately, it did not work out at all that way. You see, even though we boys publicly teased the girls, even at that young age we knew the difference between the cute ones, the charming and responsive girls from the bland and unattractive ones. The boys crowded around the

most popular, ignoring those of questionable charm. The word “wallflower” comes to mind.

Those mothers must have wept to see their daughters ignored.

Not to worry. Undaunted by this mix-up, Mrs. Hollowell moved ahead with her dance agenda, matching up the less-than-popular girls with more reluctant boys.

The class proceeded, the accompanist plunking out the appropriate tune, while Mrs. Hollowell tried to teach us the intricacies of ballroom dancing, the waltz, the tango, and the fox-trot.

The boys were to lead, the girls to conform. The trouble was that girls at that age were far better listeners than boys, so often a couple was seen arguing on the dance floor, the girl correcting her male partner. “No, no, you’ve got it wrong. This is the way Mrs. Hollowell said.” Deep down, we hoped that the ordeal would soon end. We counted the minutes.

That was in 1933, and we were but ten years old, and in fourth grade. Within a few short years the world would change. We learned later that girls were not to be avoided, but were actually fun to be with. We learned then that one of the great joys of life was romance with a beauty of our

choosing. To be a bit forward and to find one's advances not repelled but encouraged made us feel important and manly.

But for us boys, ten years old was ten years old, and girls then were necessary evils.

Cookout

Julie Griffin

for every college town
there is Cookout
for every missed meal
there is Cookout
for late-night study sessions
there is Cookout
for every drunken night
there is Cookout
for every time you only have \$5
there is Cookout
for Cookout is the driving force
behind hungry, broke people

A Typical Monday

A typical Monday evening in August.

7:30 p.m. as I walk in the door.

The sun is just starting to set
in the North Carolina sky.

I drop my keys on the counter and kick off
my shoes, finally having time to relax.

I grab a beer out of the refrigerator and begin
to thumb through the day's "snail-mail,"
junk mail and bills, nothing of interest.

I plop down in the recliner
laptop in hand, ready to creep through Facebook
to get the "real" news of the day, scrolling
past the ads and the grammatically incorrect drama-
filled posts. I find an interesting link to what may
or may not be a hoax.

After a little contemplating
and reasoning, I open the link to find disheartening
news: there in black, white, and amazing color
is his picture underneath the bold exaggerated title.

I revert back to sitting in this same chair
laughing as Mrs. Doubtfire catches herself
on fire while cooking, and admiring Peter Pan
for being forever young, then I stop,
to realize time catches everyone.

Let Be Be Finale of Seem ...

(A line by Wallace Stevens)

Ben Parr

Let be be finale of seem ...

It seems like that might be easier said than done.

It seems, right now anyway, like I fucked up, big.

It seems like I lost you, or rather, you pushed me away.

I thought you seemed too good for me.

Or are you perfect for me?

Everyone else seems to think so.

Do I?

The short answer is yes.

The longer one gets lost in the chaotic world of seem
that my mind has constructed.

Can I even trust this mind of mine?

It seems to cause more problems than it's worth.

You seem to have it all figured.

Care to share?

Spread some of your wisdom?

No, that would not be fair.

It seems like this is my personal mountain to climb.

It sure seems high and damn steep, too.

You seem to already have reached the summit of your
mountain.

How is the air up there?

I wonder if you will wait a while for me?

It seems like you should not.

I may take too long, or slip and fall, it seems like I may not
make it at all.

You seem so far away, all the way up there.

How is the view?

Right now it seems like I will never reach you.

It seems to me like possibly I am not meant to.

Or am I just too scared to?

One thing is for sure, all these thoughts about *seem* seem
to lead

to thoughts about *am*.

It seems like I am lost. I feel lost.

I am lost in seem.

I am swimming in lethargy, in caution, hesitation and
uncertainty.

The water is cloudy with uncertainty, uncertainty and fear.

But what am I afraid of?

What the fuck is so scary about you?

I am not sure. Let me think.

I am scared of commitment, scared to be limited, scared we
are not

as good for one another as we seem.

Mostly, I am scared to try and fail, scared to let you down.

Stupid reason, I know.

Maybe, though, all this uncertainty means I am not ready,
not ready

for such a commitment, not ready for you.

Maybe not, though.

Maybe you are just what I need.

I am, after all, happiest when with you.

With you I am confident, more carefree.

With you I dance!

With you I learn, think, question, act!

I am more me.

Or so I seem to be.

There it is again, that damned *seem*.

But the *be* was there, too.

I need more *be*, less *seem*.

How does one *be*?

Can one just cease to seem and begin to be?

There must be more to it.

Do I really want to be with you?

Or do you just seem like you are right for me?

I am not ready, clearly.

I am still nervous, afraid, uncertain.

I am still battling lust.

I am an animal.

Can I ever stop being an animal?

Should I even try?
I am a boy, not ready to be a man.
You deserve a man.
You deserve what I am not sure I can be.
I am not ready to be.
But I am questioning, learning, growing.
It seems like I am on the way to be.
Wait for me, will you?

The Milky Way

Tara Algieri

Freckles and moles—intricate constellations—
that connect across your body.

The scar on your thigh
from the bite of that Brown Recluse spider
is the North Star.

Tattoos cover your right arm creating the heavens—
Jesus Christ and your grandmother.
Both people you find solace in during prayer.

Your hands are calloused from work
but still feel soft when they cup my face.

Your skinny frame envelopes mine without effort
as we become the night sky and stars.

Although it feels as if we shouldn't since some days
I feel like Jupiter to its every moon.
But daily your voice tells me I'm beautiful.

You have a birthmark behind your right ear
that's your solar eclipse—
visible after you get a haircut.
I think it's beautiful—you hate it.

You loved me the moment you saw me.
As the moon loves the sun,
though they chase each other away every day.

You are wonderful—I am wild.
You the North Star to my shooting star.

Yet you lead me home no matter where I am shooting.
And your smile is the home Scarlett and I begged for.

What I Would Rather Say

*I asked if you needed help,
not if you needed a favor.*

I don't need a favor, I need
to borrow your truck.

*Was that a trick statement
or did I just miss the question?*

(12:16 AM) Can you check
this person's room for this?

*You mean can I wake some-
one up in the middle of the night?*

Can you get the tab? I don't
have any cash on me.

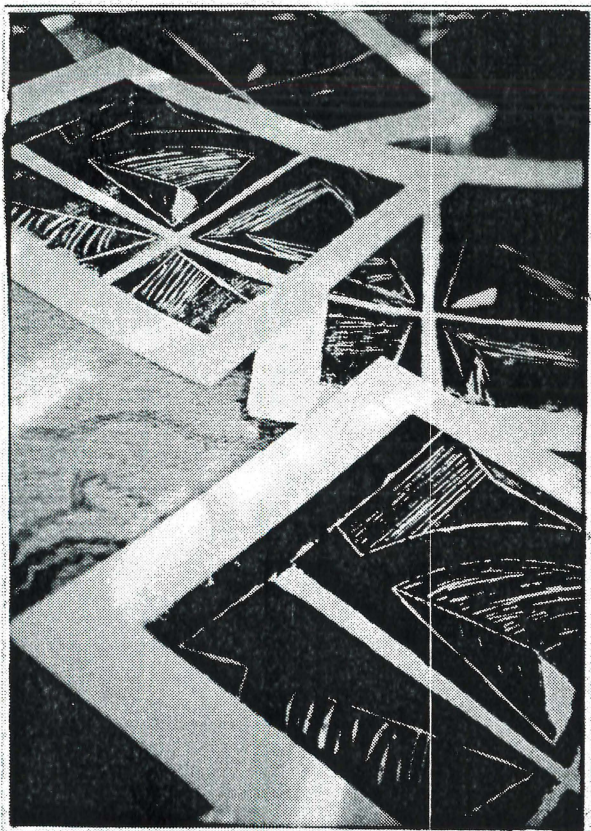
*Of course, let me reach
into my endless bank account.*

Is there anyway you could
do my job for me?

*Got it, let me just do everything
for you so you don't get tired.*

Can you stop thinking
and just stand there?

*Could you shut up and
leave me alone, please?*



Drop Left

David Herr

Haiku

Patrick Doyle

The lights on the ground
Outnumber those in the sky
Their beauty does not

Those Machines in Your Pockets

Our professor said,

“The new universal language is Apple.”

It’s true—iPods replaced Walkmen

Which in turn replaced listening to nature.

Do you remember listening to nature?

Luckily we’re over that nonsense!

You can’t bring Two-Chainz up the mountain.

A comedian observed

That Facebook has replaced friendship.

I agree—nobody talks in person today.

Emails made letters outdated.

Instant messaging made email obsolete.

When was your last face-to-face talk?

K. Just txt me L8R. Bye.

A blog I read

Called smartphones modern pocket-watches

Just look—now they are attacking our wrists.

Who has the time for watches anyway?

Basic machines with only one function.

I need 4G to even consider a purchase.

Besides, there’s an app for that.

An old woman despaired

Machines have taken our *curiosity* away.

It’s sad—this generation can’t even hold conversations.

We carry dictionaries, encyclopedias, and more

all locked into a rectangle the size of my palm

and yet, all we have left are machines.

With more access comes less information.

In the Rush of the Present Era

In the rush of the present era
We don't have time to talk
—Save when we walk.
So it happens our dialogues always take us to
 Doorways
Here we pause
 Standing
 At these modern-day crossroads.

Anagram

Vincent Pugh

Cheating = Teaching

Sciatic/Flea Fray

Carol Whitehead

I pulled the thirsty white bath towel from the dryer, folded it in half, and stepped outside to find Velvet, who lay stretched out on the cement driveway illuminated only by the nearly full moon. It was 11:00 p.m., time to check the weather and perhaps a bit of news or a British comedy.

Misery had been creeping in slowly, stealthily, and completely over a period of about three or four weeks. I took note of the signs, laughing to my friends that the house, Velvet, and I were growing old together. I had just celebrated my 79th birthday, Velvet (a throw away at our corner) her 16th or 17th year, and the house, 42 years. The stress of daily living had increased exponentially and the skin on my hands, arms, and legs had turned red, raw, and painful without any reasonable explanation that I could accept.

Moving gently and quietly toward Velvet, I dropped the towel over her very thin prone body. She growled in protest but as I gathered her in my arms with only her little face looking up at mine, she acquiesced and began to purr. We stepped inside and settled ourselves in a kitchen chair to

watch T.V. which had become a routine over the last three or four weeks. She responded favorably to the scratching of the top of her head, neck, and chest, stretching out a paw to tap my hand for more.

I was in denial about a torn meniscus in my right knee, now about three months old. But a few Aleve now and then helped me pretend it didn't hurt. However, something far more painful was beginning to plague my left hip and a screaming pain as I tried to move announced an inflamed sciatic nerve which tore its searing pain over my piriformis and down the outside of my left leg.

This could not be ignored but before it became unbearable, I watched my beloved Velvet behave in stranger and stranger ways. She insisted on drinking out of the toilet so I place a step stool to make access easier because she was falling over and crying. She wanted to eat many times a day but only a bite or two but never willing to accept the leftover food. As a result I was buying salmon, lots of Fancy Feast, and trying new cat food almost every day. There'd be a smorgasbord of various foods on paper plates with only a sampling eaten of each. I was throwing out \$10.00 worth of cat food a day. She started jumping onto the door of the dishwasher, the dryer, and into the shower. She found dark cool corners, peeking out from deep under the pantry shelves.

A friend said it seemed to her that Velvet had fleas, and I should have her checked. I had not seen fleas but every day there was an increasing cleanup of clumps of hair as she began scratching more and more. Small crusty things were on her skin and being scratched off in the house. Then there appeared hundreds and hundreds of tiny red dots wherever she was. I finally confined her to the bathroom but with access to the outdoors which allowed mosquitoes and flies to come in and do their pesky activities, too. I could not put any towel that she touched or used in the washing machine without first using a sticky roller to lift what was like sand, bloody dots, and hair—a roller a day, 50 or more sheets.

I still could not figure out what was really going on for I had seen no fleas jumping on or off Velvet or me. In desperation I called Bunny to help me clean. She arrived early one morning. When I told her what was happening she asked why in the world I couldn't tell that Velvet had a really bad case of fleas and the red spots were eggs erupting and pointed out the almost visible black dots by the hundreds. I looked through a little 30x microscope I had, burst into tears, and collapsed in pain physically and emotionally. How could I have been so stupid! I thought you could see fleas. I bought into the idea of several friends that Velvet had a really bad dry-skin condition suggesting I rub oils on her skin and feed her fish oil.

The next pain decked me. I could not walk and could barely move. Glancing at my legs covered with a number of red dots, the doctor said, "You know those are flea bites." He wrote a prescription for pain, told me if I wanted to get rid of the sciatic nerve pain I must go to bed for at least five days, take the pain killers, and get up only to eat and to use the bathroom. If I didn't do what I was told, he'd put me in the hospital.

I had no other alternative. Bobby, my next-door neighbor, said he'd gladly feed Velvet as he had done for years at times when I was away. I followed instructions and gradually after five days of inactivity and the kindness of my family, I was able to stand up and walk with pain I could endure.

Bobby said Velvet was eating but going inside for most of the time. I called Bunny as I began to realize my beloved feline companion for 15 years had been enduring untold suffering and was just looking for a place to get away from her tormentors. She was now so infested that there was little hope of curing her weakened body! I, too, had allowed the infestation to invade every room in the house and me.

I had cancelled every engagement for the previous eight days all because of my lack of understanding about fleas and debilitating pain. In the early stages of this flea/sciatic nerve

disaster, I got a phone call from a high school classmate from Liberty, Missouri, whom I had not seen for quite some time. She said, "You're coming to our reunion. I'm picking you up at the airport in Kansas City and you're staying with me!" I really wanted to make the trip and since, at that time, still my world was somewhat intact, I arranged the flight to attend my 61st high school reunion in Liberty, Missouri. Three days before I was to leave, my doctor gave me the "okay" and a note for a wheelchair if needed.

I don't mean to drag this saga out much longer but, while still living at my son's home because of the flea infestation, their dear little Coco, a Westie, jumped up to give me a kiss. Her teeth met mine and chipped a chunk out of a front tooth necessitating an emergency trip to the dentist for repair.

I came by my home to check on my precious Velvet. Bunny was with me and we saw it was obvious that Velvet was in bad shape. Bunny suggested we take her to the animal hospital to see if they could help me know what to do. We got her into the carrying case under duress. At the Humane Society, she fought the attendants with such vicious tenacity, ripping the glove off one of the attendant's hands, hissing and clawing. They were kind but said they didn't feel they could even check her and suggest the nearest veterinarian who told us to bring her in. Bunny and the

veterinarian asked me if I thought she should be “put to sleep.”

Sick with sadness over the death of my fifteen-year-feline companion, continuing hip pain, a broken tooth, and a flea-infested house made it difficult to get some clothes for the trip to Missouri. Every garment was shaken and closely inspected by my little 30x microscope.

James, my son, drove me to Charlotte, one hundred miles away, to catch my plane. My arms, hands, and legs were covered with an angry rash, flea bites here and there, but my spirits rose with the airplane and the next five days I began to heal physically, mentally, and emotionally surrounded by old and dear friends of the Class of 1953. I figured I could deal with whatever came my way when I arrived home.

The unused Fancy Feats and toys found welcome recipients. The white bath towels, her nightly wraps, washed, bleached, and stacked in the linen closet. I dwell on the joy she brought this widow for fifteen years. I continue to thank God every day for my many undeserved blessings.

The house and I continue to grow old. Velvet, too, had a good life until the last three weeks. I'm still not able to live in my house but it's in the process of being de-fleaed. I continue to take some pills for pain and put on my white

Tyvek suit to go in and vacuum my house and check things at home.

The physical things of this life must be put aside but the blessing of memories in many forms lasts a lifetime no matter how old we are! I loved Velvet and she loved me. She did not want to die and fought against it but this is true of most of God's creatures. And there is something to be said for unconditional love, but I feel that I betrayed her. Prayers and candles.

Velvet

I wake to hear her crying
 Sadly from her grace
She was not ready to die

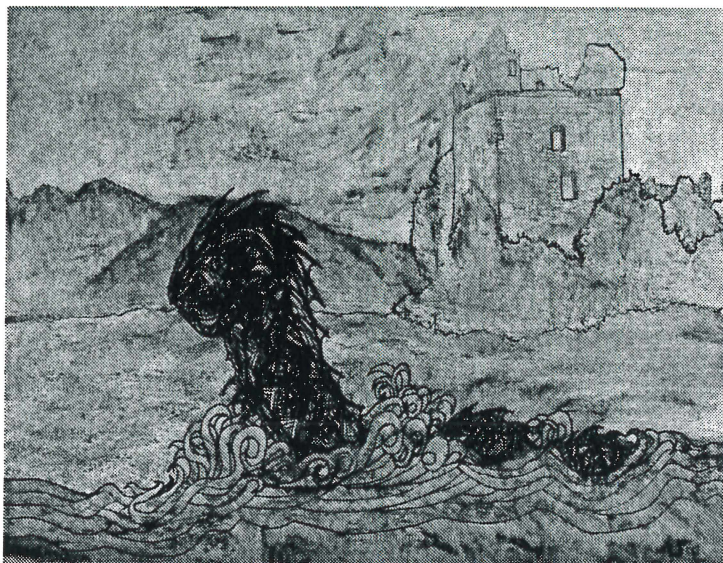
I wanted her to live, too
 I miss her daily
For she was my companion

Velvet, Tabby was her name
 Lived a good long life
Adopted by the Whiteheads

Thrown out fifteen years ago
 Rescued from the street
Our big yard was her domain

She was a one-person cat
 Knowing I saved her
We understood each other

Her sad cry wakes me at night
 I see her sad eyes
As she pleads for help from me.



Cryptid Beneath Urquhart

Stuart Marshall

Haiku

Dakota Lee

Deep mist of horse breath
Melts my frozen hands and face
Indescribable

Haiku

The scent of horses
Is deeper than you can smell
You have to feel it

Shit Talker

Sophia Kasian

I don't care what you hear
He tells numerous lies
Controlling your mind, puppeteer
He is an enemy in disguise
Waiting for our demise
Lurking in the shadows, stalker
Always has shifty eyes
Never trust a shit talker

He enjoys the smell of fear
Almost as much as French fries
Wishing he would just disappear
I'd love to hear his cries
As I rip out his eyes
And stuff him in a locker
Packed with flies
Never trust a shit talker

His time will soon end, my dear
Little by little his soul dies
Revealing and making his demons clear
Soon he'll see he's not wise
Not having many allies
It may come to him as a shocker
He's no prize
Never trust a shit talker

Karma will soon arise
As he leisurely sits on his rocker
Thinking of all his highs
Never trust a shit talker

Clerihew

Jarrett Vaughn

Kelsey Kocher
Has never been mediocre
She is sometimes delirious
And always mysterious

Nightlife

Kelsey Kocher

the sun falls
over the horizon
creatures of the night
come out
commotion starts
time stops ticking
boom of the bass
reverberations
course across the floor
rhythm flows
through the souls
strobe lights
flicker
voices harmonious
bass drops
chaos emerges
dub step here
trap there
dancing till
the break of day
when figures
can handle
no more

Autumn Flame

It's 1984. The Devon Horse Show. I'm 18. I'm sitting outside the in-gate of the ring, about to walk in with my mare Autumn into my final High Junior/Amateur-Owner Jumper class. I run the course down over in my head once more. I glance down at my father who is standing to the right side of Autumn and me.

The announcer's voice booms over the loudspeaker as he states the current standing of the horse walking out of the ring. My heart rate picks up a couple notches as I gather up Autumn's reins. She feels the change and I can feel her body begin to go into show mode. Her nostrils do a light flare and her ears prick forward. My father puts a reassuring hand on my knee as he looks up at me. "You've got this. Knock 'em dead."

He gives a light squeeze and releases his grip as I squeeze my legs into Autumn's sides, urging her forward toward the ring. I shorten my reins and apply more pressure to the sides of the saddle, asking Autumn to pick up a trot. She automatically picks up the pace and moves up into the trot. She picks her head up an inch and pricks her ears even more far forward. I circle around to the right, going right in between the triple bar and plank.

“Whoa,” I say to Autumn as I gently but firmly half-halt, asking her to walk. A second goes by and everything around me is silent. The buzzer sounds and the timer begins counting down from 45.

I push Autumn’s shoulder out and pick up the right lead. I can feel the raw power from her haunches as she responds instantaneously and she surges forward. I urge her on, lengthening her stride as I canter down the long side by the bleachers. I reach the end of the ring and I look around to the right for my first oxer—absolutely enormous. I continue my strong canter out of the corner, approaching the blue-and-white-striped rails. I sit back and collect her, putting her power into compact strides. I listen to the sound of her cat-like hoofbeats rhythmically hit the ground. Then, she locks in. I hear the last, powerful stride she takes. And then ... there is no sound as we soar through the air.



Brittany Burkhart

Matthew Malik

Rosalind Moffatt-Haizel

Jen George

Katie Buckley

Stuart Marshall

Samantha Tayler

Justin Brown

Nicole Napoleone

Jim Beales

Katie Mosca

Jule Griffin

Connor Mahoney

Ben Parr

Sophia Iannuzzi

Tara Algieri

David Herr

Patrick Doyle

Vicent Pugh

Carol Whitehead

Dakota Lee

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